



ICMEESA news

March
2009

THE INSTITUTION OF CERTIFICATED MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: +27(11) 487 1683

Fax: 0866718533

Faxmail:0866718533

Website: www.icmeesa.com

Email: icmee@pixie.co.za

Street Address: 18A Gill Street,
Observatory
Johannesburg
2198

Postal Address: PO Box 93480
Yeoville,
2143

1. Presidential Review of 2008: Chris Schnehage



**ICMEESA – President 2009
Mr Jack W Cunningham**



**Immediate Past President
Mr Chris Schnehage**

CONTENTS

1. Presidential Review of 2008 – Mr C Schnehage.
2. Presidential address: The Evolution of the Certificate of Competency – Mr J W Cunningham.
3. ICMEESA – adding value.
4. New Membership Numbers

In accordance with clause 4.03 of the Constitution, the Council has pleasure in presenting the Ninety-Eighth Annual Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 December 2008.

The past year has been a very busy year for all. It is evident in the way individuals are juggling their time between commitments. Never mind the work load of our daily tasks. Nevertheless, the members of EXCO and Council still manage to put a tremendous amount of time and energy into the operational matters of the Institution. This Annual report serves to provide a brief summary of some of the actions taken during the year. The extent of the matters attended to are not necessarily limited to what is reflected in the report. Activities of the Institution during the year are as follows:

- An approach has been made by Council to ECSA earlier in the year about the difficulty experienced by members to be accepted as Professional Certificated Engineers by the Registration Committee. This issue has not been resolved as yet and continues to enjoy attention from Council. The main problem of this issue is the fact that the requirement for registration is a legal appointment and many firms insisting on Pr Registration before making an appointment. Secondly, there are many Certificated Engineers who are very capable and knowledgeable who do not work in the environment where an appointment is necessary and as such now cannot become Registered as a result.
- There continues to be a steady increase in membership applications. This is good to see and healthy for the Institution.
- The Gauteng (Central) Branch of the Institution has still not got off the ground in spite of having Dave Reading as a stand-in Chairman. The success of a central branch has always been a cause of concern. The correct solution or combination of solutions is still being sought.
- Communication. Four newsletters have been produced and distributed, together with the Western Cape Bulletin, to all members during the year. One of the concerns we have about communication is the high number of members whose email addresses we either do not have or that are outdated. Somehow we need to address this issue as communication is one of the most important functions of our Institution. Our webmaster has set up a communication Blog and as yet this form of communication has still not taken off.
- Bursaries. The Institution has 2 bursars registered and we are currently seeking additional candidates who would fit our profile.
- Continued Professional Development (CPD). There have been a number of courses validated for CPD points. This area continues to be an opportunity for the Institution to provide useful input to members. All locally presented talks and events could be registered with ECSA as they happen.
- Branches. The activity of the branches has been very disappointing. The active branches at present are Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Western Cape. For some reason the other branches are not operating and there has been nobody willing to take up the reins and put activities together for members. This is a concern to the Institution as we should be offering our members some activity to assist with CPD point accumulation.
- Council for the Built Environment. The CBE proposed a set of Legislation which has had everyone in the engineering world worried. The Institution studied this proposed Legislation and submitted necessary comment as requested by the processes. The proposed Bill was withdrawn from the parliamentary programme for technical and legal reasons. However, the Bill is bound to be placed on the agenda again this coming year.
- Mr Jack Cunnington attended the ECSA President's Forum meeting on my behalf and Vaughan Townsend attended the launch of the National Task Force meeting and the AMRE AGM on my behalf.
- Branch visits to Eastern Cape and KZN were carried out.
- Prof Hu Hanrahan addressed the Council on the Certificated Engineer Initiative and what has been happening behind the scenes in respect of the future of the Certificated Engineer as a qualification. A short report on this feedback is available on our web site.
- The SAQA has registered the Certificated Engineer as a qualification and this can be viewed on the SAQA website (SAQA Qual ID 63450).
- Various members have attended portfolio meetings as noted under the section Council Representatives in this report, throughout the year. Thank you for your continued support and efforts!
- Five member's names have been put forward to serve as nominations for examiners to the Commission of Examiners. No result has been forthcoming as yet.

The financial status of ICMESA has remained positive and is going from strength to strength. The audited and certified annual financial report which is included in this annual report shows that the financial expenditure is well controlled and a concerted effort has again gone into the recovery of subscriptions. Well done to Robbie Holmwood and Fiona Revolta on controlling the finances so well.

The annual year end function was held on the 25th October 2008 at the Tuscan BBQ, situated in the Monte Casino in Johannesburg where a buffet lunch was enjoyed by all who attended.

Thank you to Fiona and those members of EXCO who have supported me during my two years as President and for those who have attended functions on my behalf. It has been an honour and a pleasure for me to serve this esteemed Institution as President.

Congratulations to the newly elected Council and EXCO as well as the President for 2009, Jack Cunnington, and Vice Presidents who are making themselves available for the coming year. Your efforts and contributions do not pass unnoticed.

Finally, thank you to all our members. We always look forward to communicating with you and I would like to encourage further communication as that is one of the weaknesses all Institutions like ours have.

May the Institution continue to represent its members in the best way possible?

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen

2. Presidential Address: Mr J.W. Cunnington

The Evolution of the Certificate of Competency

Introduction

At the beginning of the 20th century it was realised that there was a need in industry, Mines and Factories, to appoint competent person to assume responsibility for a safe working environment for the personnel, the safe operation of machines, and the surrounds of the workplace.

Engineering work related safety rules, mostly derived from the British industrial rules, laws and the marine industry, were adapted and established. These later formed the basis of what became labour laws and eventually the Factories and Mines and Works acts respectively, the OSH act as we know it today.

As a result of this, the first Government Certificate of Competency was issued by the then Mines Department of the Union of South Africa to the first successful candidate, Mr Wesley Ernest John during 1912. Mr Wesley Ernest John became President of this Institution in 1939.

Most certificated engineers, "ticket holders", from the early years to the mid 60s were appointed as resident engineers at mines, utilities, factories and other industries. From the mid 60s designation changes mostly derived from the Patterson grading system in the utilities and factories environment were implemented and engineers were appointed as superintendents and later managers. This resulted in utilities and factories running plant with superintendents who were not necessarily qualified engineers. Currently the trend is being reversed and certificated engineers are again appointed as engineers, senior engineers, chief engineers and consulting engineers etc.

The mining fraternity to a greater extent kept the designations of engineer, plant engineer, section engineer etc. headed by a Resident Engineer and later an Engineering Manager.

Evolvement of the Certificate of Competency

A past president of the institution (Mr CV Rutter) asked the question during his presidential address: will there be a certificate of competence in 2000 AD?. I am not sure why he asked the question, but may have the answer later in my address. We are not sure what the exact criteria was during 1912 to be accepted as a candidate to write the prescribed examination, but assume a person had to be an artisan with strong technical abilities and knowledge of the regulations and relevant Acts. After the second world war the criteria was set that a person had to be an artisan with a specified trade, have an NTC 2 qualification, 5 years relevant experience and be at least 23 years of age.

During the late 1950s this was changed to NTC 3 plus the same criteria as above. During the late 1960s the NTC and ATC courses were replaced with N1 to N6

leading to the N Diploma courses which were well accepted by industry.

Hence the criteria for acceptance as a candidate for the examination was adapted, candidate still had to 23 years of age but could be accepted as a candidate by holding one of the following qualifications: A BSc engineering graduate; a T3 with prescribed subjects and experience, an artisan from certain trades and prescribed subjects from N3 to N6 With a minimum mark of 50% per subject.

Though there were many excellent Certificated Engineers from the previous dispensations, the new acceptance criteria for candidates especially from the artisan's pipeline produced theoretically better equipped engineers as a result of the broader educational base.

Certificated Engineers from this era excelled in their field, industry recognised their engineering abilities and skills and appointed many of these certificated engineers in specialised disciplines such as design, network planning, maintenance consulting etc. where they proved themselves as competent engineers occupying senior positions.

Further Evolvement of the Certificate of Competency.

ECSA developed a model demonstrating the pathways leading to the Certificate of Competency. With the N courses now being phased out

The suggested alternative routes are:

- BSc Engineering graduate
- B Tech with prescribed subjects and experience
- Artisan with prescribed new L5 and L6 courses and experience leading to a stage 1 and 2 qualifications.

It is of paramount importance that our institution participates in and influence the process to ensure the interest of our members is guarded and the status of the certificated engineer is maintained.

During the 1960s the certificate of competency was evaluated by the HSRC as an M + 3 qualifications. With the new education dispensation the certificate was not submitted for evaluation, thus for a period of time not regarded as a qualification.

ECSA appointed a workgroup who produced an excellent document which was submitted to SAQA for evaluation. We can proudly announce SAQA evaluated and on 22 October 2008, officially registered the Certificate as a level 7 qualification. Sadly this is not well communicated neither to the public at large nor employers.

Professional Registration

The current total number of certificates issued is 16672, of which 9690 were issued by the DME and 6982 by the DoL. Yet only 970 certificated engineers and 178 candidate Pr Cert Eng are registered with ECSA. ICMEESA, representing both the mining and factories fraternities, identified criteria in the registration process that eliminates numerous qualified certificated engineers from being registered and will engage with

ECSA to revisit the registration criteria to accommodate more candidates for registration.

We encourage our members to register with ECSA as we believe that every certificated engineer who meets the minimum standards should be registered with ECSA. In doing so they not only make the fact known to the public but also demonstrates they are willing to be scrutinised by their peers.

Conclusion

The Institution needs to adapt to a changing and challenging environment. The traditional feeding pipeline for Certificated Engineers has changed, due to less apprentices enrolled, thus producing less artisans. Complimenting this is the fact that the N courses are being phased out. Not only are more certificates now issued to BSc graduates and B Tech candidates than N stream candidates, but they also outnumber new applications for acceptance as candidates for the examinations, which seem to follow the natural process evolving. This could be expected to change with the implementation of the new L courses. Although the South African Certificate of Competency is not recognised by other countries, it is starting to appear on advertisements for vacancies in Australia, Dubai and elsewhere.

As incoming President, I expect a challenging year ahead. The role of the institution of Certificated Mechanical and Electrical Engineers will however remain to focus on the interests of its members and promoting the general advancement of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering sciences.

Thank you.

3. ICMEESA Adding Value: Thanks Sibusisu

The following is a letter received by ICMEESA in appreciation of assistance given to a parent seeking guidance on her son's career.

Dear Fiona

A follow-up to my request for assistance regarding my son. Bryce De Bruyn.

Your Durban representative, S'busiso Ngema contacted me and suggested that Bryce and I meet with him. We met Sat. 14/02/09.

He suggested Bryce start off with N1 and N2 in order to get a better understanding of the practical side of his work. He further suggested that Bryce do this fulltime (if possible) and once he has accomplished this, he kindly offered to assist Bryce further. He also offered to be of assistance as and when Bryce needed it i.e. if he did not understand something with his studies, etc.

I haven't got sufficient words to describe what an absolute inspiration S'busiso was - not only to Bryce but to myself. After he spent a great deal of his own time explaining to Bryce and I what needs to be done in order for Bryce to move forward with his career, he also gave Bryce amazing advise concerning self-discipline, chose of friends, study advise, etc. Exactly what a boy

of his age needed to hear With my son having had no real male model and/or mentor in his life (and a very 'low self-esteem' that usually comes with having a learning disability), he has had his fair share of visits to psychiatrists and psychologists (over the past several years), but not one of them have ever managed to get across to Bryce and inspire him the way S'busiso did on Saturday.

After having sat and listened to S'busiso, I came to realise that there were still a lot of good people out there! What an amazing role model and human being he is. I thank you once again for giving Bryce and I the time of day!

Kind regards, Karen Guy

Thanks Sibusisu, the last paragraph says it all, you do the Institution proud.

4. Membership Numbers

On of our older members questioned that the membership number on his membership certificate did not correspond with the number reflected on his recently received subscription invoice.

It was for administrative and specifically banking reasons that, in 2005, we introduced new membership numbers. The original membership numbers had no formal rationale and had changed randomly prior to that date. Our membership database retains both old and new numbers, with those joining since that date only having one "new number".

The "new" membership number has the following rationale:

The number is 5 digits. The left hand number is either a 1 or a 2, representing the century 1XXXX or 2XXXX. The second two numbers represents the year the member joined. The last two numbers represents the number recruited for that specific year. Member number 20423 implies that the member joined in 2004 and was the 23rd person to join in that year.

On the invoice, the membership number is then preceded by the year of the invoice to accommodate the 7 digit banking referencing number. This year's invoice for the above member will be 0920423.

Interestingly, the database shows that only in 1977 did new membership for a single year exceed 100. With 70 new members having joined in 2008, and 27 new members to date for 2009, one ponders on how long it will be before we need to find a solution to cater for more than 100 members annually.

5. Express your view or pinion on the ICMEESA Blogging site

In striving to improve communication to, and between members themselves we have established a blogging site. The link to the Blog can be found on our web site at: www.icmeesa.com .